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REFORMER

Though Vizetelly now had plenty of work before him — for besides completing the edition of " The Heptameron " on which he had been engaged in 1889, he was helping his father with his reminiscences, — he was anxious to make early arrangements with respect to " Lourdes " in the hope of profiting by any reaction in Zola's favour which the forthcoming visit to London might promote. In that respect, while he observed with pleasure that English newspaper men seemed to be recovering from their former aberration, he thought it hardly right to leave Zola entirely in the hands of a profession, many of whose members, only a few years previously, had covered him with unmitigated abuse. In these circumstances he communicated with Mr. afterwards Sir Walter Besant, whom he knew to be well informed respecting Zola and his works,<sup>1</sup> and who had also shown great personal kindness at the time of the Vizetelly prosecution. Besant took the hint immediately, but was almost at a loss what to suggest, for in all probability in the latter part of September, when Zola would arrive in London, few English authors of note would be there. However, he saw Mr. Oswald Crawford, chairman of the Authors' Club, and Mr. Crawford, a man of broad views like Besant himself, took up the matter with alacrity. During the interval which ensued, Mr. Besant

wrote several  
times to Ernest Vizetelly, going so far, on one  
occasion, as  
to say, " A dinner will be given at the club to  
M. Zola and  
yourself on any day to be<sup>i</sup> named — as quickly  
as possible  
—by yourself." But Vizetelly, while  
accepting the in-

<sup>1</sup> Sir Walter himself related that when \*' L'Assommoir " came into his hands he sat up all night to read it, unable to put it down until he had reached the last word.